



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 16 January 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
16 JANUARY 1968

1. South Vietnam

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2. South Vietnam

The Confederation of Labor has authorized more sympathy strikes for today. There are some indications, however, that the government may release the six labor leaders arrested last week. This could pave the way for settlement of the strikes.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Concern for Rice Crop: A recent Nhan Dan editorial called on rural localities to suspend all "talks" that are not urgent in order to complete the sowing of the spring rice crop by early February. The current planting was said to be proceeding too slowly and might lead to a shortage of seedlings for transplanting or to shortfalls in planted acreage.

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[REDACTED]

that the North Vietnamese during the past two months have been building a new underground headquarters somewhere in the hills between Lang Son and the Red River. It is not possible to pinpoint this facility in the almost 100-mile area given, but there have been earlier reports that a headquarters facility was being built outside Lang Son. In addition, a pattern of VIP flight activity last summer suggested that high-level North Vietnamese officials--possibly Ho Chi Minh himself--were living there.

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Relations with France: Paris-Hanoi relations continue their gradual warming trend, according to Embassy Paris. The North Vietnamese representative in Paris, Mai Van Bo, edged one step closer to diplomatic status on 10 January by attending his first official diplomatic reception. The French Foreign Office has explained that Bo asked to be invited to the reception on the grounds that the French representative in Hanoi enjoyed such privileges, and the French acceded to the request in the interests of reciprocity. The French want their man in Hanoi to be given maximum access to North Vietnamese leaders and have cooperated over the past year in a gradual upgrading of diplomatic relations with Hanoi. This trend will apparently continue in 1968.

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Extra Work: The efficiency of Vietnamese employees of the diplomatic community in Hanoi is apparently seriously affected because, in addition to their normal duties, they are required to work for agencies of the government for several hours each night.

[REDACTED] This requirement for additional work may mean that evacuation has shrunk the manpower pool in the capital so much that all available skilled persons are required to help the city and government function.

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Black Marketing: According to a Western traveler to Hanoi, government cadres in the Nam Dinh area have been buying pork ration cards from farmers, then purchasing pork and reselling it on the black market at prices ranging from two to four times the original cost.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

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Hanoi on US Antiwar Protests: Yesterday Hanoi broadcast in English a wrap-up of Western press reports concerning recent antiwar protests in the US. The broadcast alleged that the demonstration in front of the Justice Department last week was a "protest against the Johnson administration's persecution of five American intellectuals who firmly opposed the US dirty war in Vietnam." A United Press report of the demonstrations in front of the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco is also cited, with the comment that "Rusk was inside pleading for the Johnson policy of aggression in Vietnam." Another report, says Hanoi, tells of 328 American economists who recently sent an open letter to US Congressmen to protest against the war, arguing that it "constitutes the principal source of US economic difficulties."

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